

Message Text

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UNCLAS WELLINGTON 03742

FOR: VOA PGM/P PGM/R, CINCPAC FOR USICA ADVISOR

EO 11652: N/A
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION, VIETNAMESE VISIT

1. WELLINGTON'S MORNING PAPER, THE DOMINION, JULY 19,
IN ITS LEAD EDITORIAL ON THE VISIT OF VIETNAM'S DEPUTY
FOREIGN MINISTER, PHAN HIEN, UNDER THE HEADING "RESPONDING
TO VIETNAM" COMMENTED: -

2. "VIETNAM'S DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER, PHAN HIEN, WON'T
GET FAR IF HIS MISSION IS TO PERSUADE NEW ZEALAND TO TAKE
HIS COUNTRY'S SIDE IN ITS ROW WITH CHINA. THE CHORUSES
OF MUTUAL ABUSE EMANATING FROM PEKING AND HANOI SOUND
TO US LIKE POTS CALLING KETTLES BLACK...

3. "THE SPECTACLE OFFERS LITTLE COMFORT TO OUTSIDERS,
HOWEVER. THE CLASHES BETWEEN CAMBODIA, A SURROGATE OF
CHINA, AND VIETNAM, AND THE BUILD-UP OF TENSION WHICH
BEGINS TO LOOK MORE AND MORE LIKE A NEW RUSSIAN CUBA,
ARE FLASHPOINTS THREATENING TO DESTABILISE THE WHOLE OF
SOUTH-EAST ASIA. THIS IS AN AREA OF VITAL STRATEGIC
CONCERN FOR NEW ZEALAND, OF COURSE, SO WE HAVE A PRESSING
INTEREST TO SEE THE CONFLICT DEFUSED...

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4. "IT MUST BE THE PURPOSE OF NEW ZEALAND DIPLOMACY
TO DISCOURAGE VIETNAM FROM COMMITTING ITSELF SO TOTALLY
TO THE RUSSIAN SPHERE OF INFLUENCE THAT IT COMPROMISES
ITS INDEPENDENCE AND SACRIFICES ITS FREEDOM OF MANOEUVRE...

5. "SIGNIFICANTLY, VIETNAM HAS RECENTLY JOINED COMECON,
THE RUSSIAN-DOMINATED EAST EUROPEAN TRADE GROUPING. IT

IS THE FIRST SOUTH-EAST ASIAN COUNTRY TO HAVE DONE SO...
HOWEVER, THE LATEST DIRECTION OF VIETNAMESE DIPLOMACY, AS
REFLECTED IN MR HIEN'S VISIT HERE AND TO SOUTH-EAST
ASIAN CAPITALS, SEEMS TO SUGGEST THAT HANOI HAS ITS OWN
MISGIVINGS ABOUT BECOMING TOO HEAVILY ENMESHED IN THE
SOVIET NET.

6. "VIETNAM BADLY NEEDS INVESTMENT AND TRADING
OPPORTUNITIES. THE AMERICANS, UNDERSTANDABLY SMARTING
UNDER THEIR DEFEAT, MISSED THE OPPORTUNITY TO HELP
RECONSTRUCT VIETNAM AS THEY HAD HALF COMMITTED THEMSELVES
TO DO. VIETNAM TURNED TO RUSSIA INSTEAD. WITH THE
VIETNAMESE NOW TAKING THE INITIATIVE TOWARD IMPROVED
RELATIONS WITH AMERICA IT MAY NOT BE TOO LATE FOR
WASHINGTON TO REPAIR THIS ERROR." ANDERSON

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